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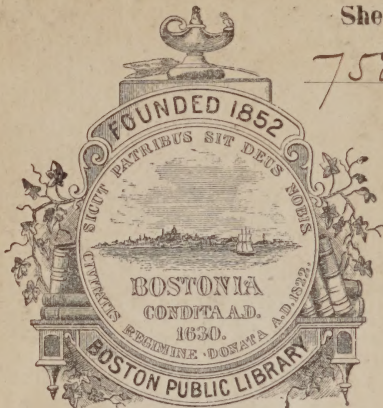


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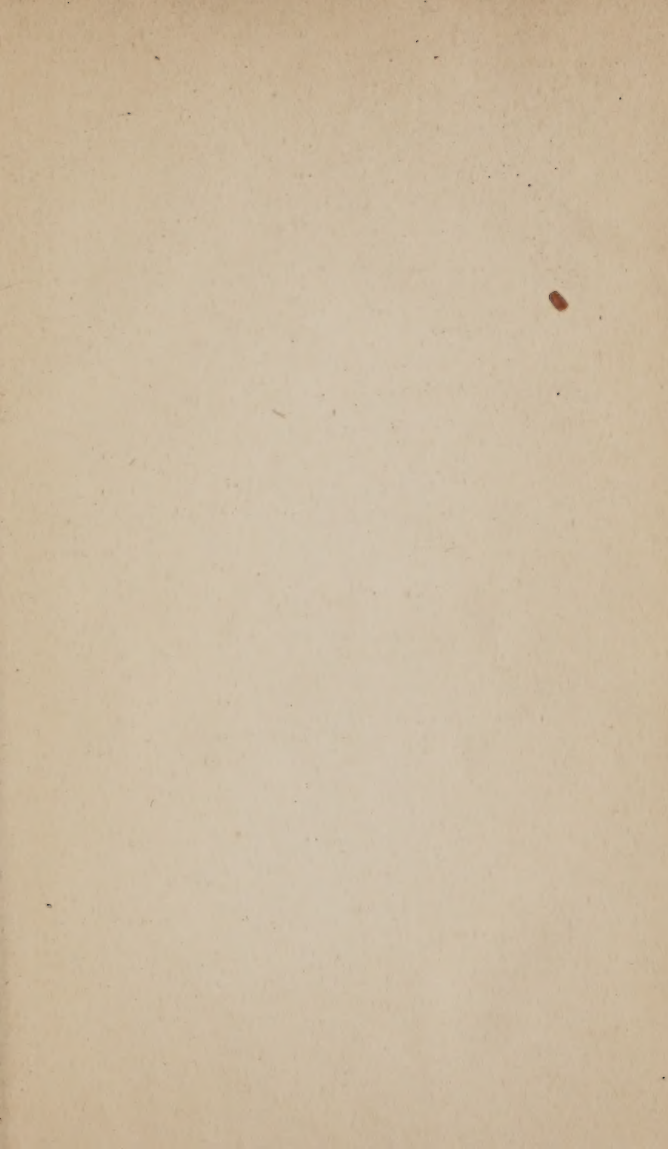
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D. F. H. Brown

June 5, 1895

F.A.B







THE

Bud, the Flower, and the Fruit;

OR THE

EFFECTS OF EDUCATION.

BY

Mrs. J. M. Miller

A LADY OF BOSTON.

Miller, J. M.

C

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JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

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Dr. F. H. Brown.

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THE

BUD, THE FLOWER, AND THE FRUIT.

CHAPTER I.

THE Bud! How we gaze upon it, full of promising beauty. It is to expand into a full flower; some cherished blossom will gradually develope itself from that seeming mystery, and gratify our sense of the wonderful or beautiful. Thus, with hope and curiosity, we daily watch its progress, and are fearful injury may destroy the fulfilment of our expectations.

Ella was a bud just opening into life, that many fond friends daily, nay, hourly tended with tenderness and care; nourishing its vitality, feeling joy and love as time gently

stole on, and new features betrayed the actual growth within, of this little immortal embryo. She was yet in the early spring of life, a delicate, gentle child. Father and mother blessed her with true love. They felt she was to them a lovely trust, loaned from their Heavenly Father; and, as a priceless treasure, they enshrined her within their hearts.

To look on Ella was to love her, for she was very lovely. A sunshine of mirth seemed to beam from, and around her; and withal, she was so affectionate and childlike; the latter a rare trait in the present generation. It is much to be regretted that such is the case. The innocent simplicity of tender age is always full of interest. The unfolding of some new idea to the infant mind, awakening to the reciprocant, as it first receives and embraces the knowledge, such emotions of wonder and joy! Who would not delight to be the witness of the same? Its gentle progress, each new conception expanding the little heart almost to fulness, as it hides the con-

quered mystery in the storehouse of memory, ready to be recalled in triumph, should occasion require it.

In former times, the little girl was still a child at twelve years of age, in word and deed; now at eight or ten, the title of Miss, and the manners of a young lady are assumed. Still there are exceptions, and our little bud is one, willing to await patiently the proper season for its development.

CHAPTER II.

"ELLA," said Mrs. Everett, "you are six years old to-morrow. What shall your parents do to celebrate the happy day, when God gave them their little bud of hope to nurture and cherish?"

"Oh! dear mamma! We will sing with the birds, and play with pussy, and run with Carlo, and oh! ever so many things, and, and ——"

"And what, my child?"

"Go to see old blind Alice, and give her my great apple, it is so large that she can feel, and know how nice it is; and then take her little grandchild, Bessie, home with us to feed the chickens; and play with the new dolly Aunt Lydia gave me. Is all that too much for one birthday, mother?"

"No, Ella. We will try to do all you have asked. I am so glad my child did not forget the comfort of others, when allowed to think of a day for her own gratification. It is only, my little girl, by making others happy, that you can find true happiness yourself."

"Why is it, mamma, that I like Bessie Greene better than Agnes Ray? Agnes is bright, and very nice; and Bessie is clean, but she is so still, and never wears ribbons, or has candy and plums like Agnes. And Agnes says, she is an old beggar's grandchild. What does she mean?"

"Which of your questions shall I answer?"

"Please, both of them, mamma."

"Well, the first, then. I hope you will try to love every one, Ella, and be kind to all around you. It is natural for us to value some above others, and, perhaps, Bessie Greene suits your taste better than Agnes. From what I have seen of Bessie, I think her a good child. Her poor, blind grandmother has given her the best instruction she was

able to, for Bessie's mother died while she was an infant, and her father was lost at sea. Mrs. Greene's infirmity was brought on by disease, and her inability to do much work has reduced them to this state of poverty. But she is patient and thankful, and those who live in the house with her, cannot but be kind, when they see how worthy she is of their aid. The neighbors also pity and assist her, sending Bessie on errands, and employing her in a variety of ways; always paying her for her little deeds generously, thus they are supported."

"Why, then, does Agnes feel unkind to them? Bessie and she are both a year older than I am; and yet Agnes pushes Bessie away; and the other day she made Bessie cry, and then I cried too, until I made Bessie laugh again, and after Agnes left us, we laughed and sang all the way home together."

"Agnes, Ella, is the daughter of our wealthiest parishioner, that is, her father has

the most money. And her mother sees so much company, she may not think she is able to instruct her daughter, in the way some other children are instructed. You should pity Agnes, and be kind to her, that she may see how pleasant it is, and follow your example."

"But why does she call Bessie, old beggar girl, and laugh at her gray calico dress and leather shoes? What is a beggar?"

"I told you, my dear, Mrs. Greene had to be dependent in some measure on the kindness of others, and the term beggar is sometimes given when this is the case. But generally, it is applied to those who are unwilling to work, and prefer to be idle, and beg from others the subsistence of life, or their daily bread. Agnes, perhaps, does not know it is unkind to speak so of Bessie, and you might gently tell her of it."

"Why should *she* care, mother, if Bessie did wear a gray calico dress and leather shoes?"

“In certain classes of society, Ella, much depends, in their minds, on the texture and fitness of the clothing one and another adopts as their customary garb. They are apt to forget the means, and think only of the appearance of those around them. You are too young, my dear, for me to explain. But one thing you must try and understand. We have a body to clothe warm and comfortably, and if circumstances permit, a cultivated taste may be allowable, in some measure, to be gratified. But we have also a mind enduring forever, when the body has past away from all earthly knowledge; an immortal mind to clothe with good and pure thoughts, and these tend to right actions; and these good deeds, my little girl, are the ornaments we use, the acknowledgment that we have with good taste clothed and cultivated our minds. Do you understand me?”

“A little, mother, you have often told me I had two lives. This one, while I am alive, and another when I die. This life is to teach

me how to be good and happy in the next. And I must take good care of this, but better care of that which is to come when I die. This life, I suppose, is the body life, and the other the mind life."

"Very well, indeed, I am glad you can explain my meaning. You now see Bessie Greene does not dress so gaily as Agnes, and Agnes judges her only by her dress, because she has not been so often instructed in the same manner you have been. You must be very careful what you do and say; you have been early taught to know and do, generally, what was right. You would be more to blame than Agnes, for treating another unkindly, on account of your knowledge on the subject of right and wrong."

"But Agnes has a mind, too, mother, and why does not her mamma teach her about that? You have company often, but you teach me a great many things."

"Yes, Agnes has a mind, and Bessie also; but Mrs. Ray may not feel the same necessity

that I do, in thus early instructing her daughter. I consider it of the first importance to daily watch and guard my little bud, that she may grow and blossom into a beautiful flower, bearing the rich, ripe fruit of a well spent and happy life ; worthy to be gathered in the great harvest of her Heavenly Father, where she shall reap the reward of fulfilling her mission here faithfully. See that delicate little bud on the peach tree by the window. Is it not pretty ? ”

“ Sweet pretty, mamma ; yet, I long for it to blossom out. A tree full of dear pink flowers ; won’t it be real pretty ? ”

“ And when it was full of flowers, what next would you like ? Do you know what follows ? ”

“ Oh, yes ! Great red peaches, so beautiful ! I wish, mother, it was full of peaches now, don’t you ? Then I would carry some to old blind Alice, with my apple to-morrow. When will they come ? ”

“ Ella must not be impatient. First comes

the bud, delicate and tender, as you see; it must be watered and cultured, and then will follow the full blossom that the bud promised. After that, if the blossom is carefully guarded from too rough treatment and still cherished, then will come forth the whole perfected into a delicious fruit, rich to the eye and taste; the tree has fulfilled its destiny; that is, it has budded, bloomed, and given its rich supply of fruit, as it were, in return, for the kind care bestowed upon it. Now, my little Ella to her parents is but a bud. Shall she not blossom into true goodness, making all around her delighted with her beauty of character? If so, we may hope the ripe fruit of virtue will follow, making her pleasant to the eye of all. It is the least she can offer her Father in Heaven, for all his kindness and care, when she was a feeble bud or the trembling blossom. For without his mercy she could not exist a moment. Will Ella try and fulfil what God intended her to be?"

"Yes, mother, I like flowers, and love to be

called a little bud. I hope I shall live and grow up like Mary Ware, then I shall be a flower. And if I am good, like you, I shall let people know I have been taken kind care of all my life, and mean to be thankful, and do all the good I can."

"I think we have conversed to some advantage this morning; now we will vary our occupation, that you may grow up straight and tall, and not be a one-sided plant, needing support for a part of itself. You must act as well as talk. Now go to your papa's study, and see if you can be a useful little girl, and for a season aid his wishes."

CHAPTER III.

ELLA's father was a clergyman in a shire town of Massachusetts. His income was very moderate, but the rare domestic virtues of his wife, and her loveliness of character, combining real intellectual cultivation with all the gentle and womanly qualities, enabled him to live in ease and apparent wealth; because the educated wishes of his family were fully supplied, and a surplus left. All wants not necessary were unknown, therefore the comfort following, and the true idea of abundance was in their possession. Ella was their only child; they had carefully watched over and instructed her, making her fully understand whatever knowledge they wished to impart, by requiring an explanation from her own mind, in answer to their instruction.

She was in good health, and gave promise of much enjoyment to her friends.

Mrs. Ray, wife of Judge Ray, was probably the most elegant lady in the county. She had been fashionably educated, the daughter of wealthy parents in a neighboring city. Fashion was her mistress, thus she became a slave to its absurdities and ever changing temperament. Her husband was a man of the world, a smart, business character, termed highly honorable by his fellow-men. He was proud of his wife, thinking her a fine addition to his establishment, a necessary appendage, adding to rather than taking from his consequence. He gave himself no particular concern, other than to answer her numerous demands upon his purse, which he was fully able to supply, supposing it a consequent arrangement for this imagined acquisition to his dignity. His child was to him, at times, a pretty plaything, and again, an annoyance, seldom thought of, other than to know she was in apparent health. It is not surprising

that the child of such parents should differ materially from our little Ella; and already this bud of human hopes gave forth evidence of its imperfect culture, and its blossom may be frustrated, and its fruit prove destructive to all who may partake of its influence.

Bessie Greene was another bud, no parent stem supported her tender growth; but a disabled relative, ignorant and feeble, gave her a kind of knowledge; enabling her to know there was a right and wrong, but not sufficient conception always to distinguish one from the other. Thus nature from her own source, or chance instruction, was the nourishment alone given to this bud, which must also in due time blossom, and yield its following fruit.

We cannot follow, very minutely, the growth of our little plants, but we will not lose sight of the results of their progress.

Ella's birthday proved even happier than she anticipated; and her idea of age was

truly augmented, by her being able to answer, when asked, seven years, instead of six. It was an event to her of great importance, this introduction to a higher stage in life, and she already felt that six was much below her present age. Such are the child thoughts. Why do children so early wish to grow up and be thought old? Hear little Ella as she now speaks.

“Mamma, I suppose I must soon give Julia Ware my dolly, and all my baby things. I do not care so much about them now, as I do for the pretty book Aunt Carrie gave me. Then, you know, I shall soon be too old to care for playthings!”

“My dear little girl, do you truly feel so soon the dignity of a week’s difference in your age? Is it not a week since you were seven years old?”

“It is, mamma, but I am in my eighth year, now, you told me.”

“Do you wish to grow old, Ella?”

"I should like to be a young lady to read and understand all you do, mother."

"That is, you would like to be in blossom, before the little bud is prepared. It is a great proof of the excellent judgment and gracious kindness of our Heavenly Father, Ella, that he gives you a season of preparation, that, as the years increase upon you, so may you gain new strength with your development in knowledge. Then you can fully sustain, and be sensible of what you are, and be able to retain for a longer period the full bloom of youth. Enjoy each hour as it comes, my child, by improving every advantage that may then be given you. Look not forward with unreasonable expectations, or behind with regrets, but let the present time be your duteous pleasure rightly to heed."

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. RAY is sitting in one of her richly-furnished apartments, conversing, or rather talking, with Agnes! Alas! another of our little buds, pale and feeble from imperfect culture.

“Agnes, has the maid shown you the new hat and silk dress I bought for your approaching birthday? Call her, and let me see if the hat is becoming.”

“No, mother; Jane did not tell me any thing about the hat, but she said, ‘I had a fine new silk, and I must stand quiet while Miss Evans fitted me.’ I will make her get my hat this moment.”

“I thought, Mrs. Ray, you would not like Miss Agnes to know, until the time she was to wear her hat, else she might wish it before the occasion.”

“No matter, bring it to me. Hold your head still, Agnes. There, Jane, bring her curls more forward. Does she not look lovely now? It is a charming hat! See, how stylish she looks, like a young princess! Now, Agnes, give it to your maid, that she may put it away for the present.”

“No, mamma, I wish to wear it out a little ways, it is on so nicely. I know how those proud and poor Ashbys will stare at it, and envy me. Emma Ashby wears a hat now, that three of her sisters had before her; and they had it altered one from the other, by putting in new linings of different colored silks, and the outside is only a rusty black velvet. How mean they are. All the girls, but Ella Everett and Winnie Jarvis, laugh at their old-fashioned things.”

“I do not wish you to wear your hat, dear, until you ride out with me to see Mrs. Minns, on your birthday; so, Jane, take it from Miss Agnes.”

“She shall not have it, mamma, until I go

down and look in the mirrors in the drawing-rooms."

"Well, do be quick, child."

Agnes runs away, and her mother says, "No wonder the dear child likes to have it on, she looks so very lovely in it. But go after her, Jane, and take care of the hat. I have other things to attend to now. Speak gently, and in time she will give it to you. Remember, she is only a child, and must be coaxed and indulged."

This scene serves to illustrate the manner in which Agnes was encouraged in vanity, envy, and pride, and the little restraint put upon her actions. Can we wonder if she becomes tyrannical through the want of this restraint? How arduous the task imposed upon her waiting-maid by the thoughtlessness of the parent, and that parent by no means a naturally heartless person; but, as we have said, fashion had educated her, and art instead of nature was allowed to triumph over all her innate and truer ideas of life and its

real duties. Appearance is the first thought and highest aim of the fashionist. And to make an appearance, Miss Agnes Ray was to be educated. But all the fashionable chemistry of our enlightened era could not give this little bud of time, so fresh and fair a coloring as nature, assisted to carry out her true designation, left on the face and mind of our cherished Ella.

CHAPTER V.

"BESSIE, where did you find that ring?"

"In the woods, grandma', under some leaves, by the old oak stump; and I did not tell any body, but brought it right home to you."

"Well, child, we must try and find an owner for it."

"And if we cannot, then the ring is mine, and it is real handsome, and just like what Miss Agnes Ray wears on her white fingers. It does not look so well on my brown hands; yet, I should love to wear it once, when she could see me, because she is so great and proud."

"Well, childy, I don't see any great harm in your wearing it once, if you are very careful not to lose it."

"But, grandma', you can only feel that it is a ring—you can't think how bright it shines."

"That is true, Bessie, but carry it into Mrs. Hosmer, in the next room, and ask about its worth. And you must go to Mrs. Everett's, and she will tell you what to do."

"I will go to-morrow, granny, but I do so want to wear it this afternoon. I am going some errands for Mrs. Johnson, right by Judge Ray's, and perhaps Miss Agnes will see my nice ring."

"Well, well, Bessie, be very sure not to lose it, and come home soon, like a good girl?"

Bessie generally avoided Agnes, because she always felt ashamed, as Agnes never failed to laugh at or be rude to her. To-day she sauntered some time before the great mansion of the Rays, feeling she could now boast one thing of as great value as Miss Agnes, for Mrs. Hosmer said, "the ring was of much worth, and it must be put in the

paper that she had found it, and some one would give her money for finding it."

Bessie was successful. Miss Agnes with her grace-hoops, at length came upon the green sward to play with a young companion.

Seeing Bessie with a bandbox, she thought she would have some fun at her expense.

"Julia, come, quickly; there's little beggar Bessie, let's go and see what she has in her box. I'll make her open it, she is afraid of me; I tell her my father is a judge, and will send her to jail if she don't mind me, so come."

"Bessie Greene, come here, and tell us what you have in your box."

Eager to display her ring, Bessie, meantime, forgot the caution Mrs. Johnson gave her, to be very careful of the caps, as she only had them sent home to look at. So stooping down, she opened and displayed the contents of the box, when each of the children took a cap, and placing it upon their heads, began

to talk and mock the manners of those, who should alone from their age have commanded their reverential respect.

“Please, Miss Agnes, don’t. They belong to a shop. If you will only give them to me, I will show you something real handsome.”

“You show us any thing handsome, exclaimed Agnes; you, little beggar Bessie! What is it? a new pair of leather shoe-strings, or a red-figured cotton handkerchief? That is funny, I declare.”

“No, Miss Agnes, (the tears flowing fast over Bessie’s face,) but it is real true, and something that costs a good deal of money. Oh, please, Miss, give me the caps.”

“There, take your old duds. Now let me see your great treasure.”

“Here it is on my finger, and when I have put up my caps, which I am so sorry you took out, I will show it to you, for grandma’ says, ‘It is wicked to tell lies,’ and it would be a lie, if I did not. But what will the shop-

woman say? she will scold me, and I must tell her what you did, Miss."

"No, you shan't, Bessie; if you do, my father will put you in that great stone house, and lock you up. Now, show me your ring. You can say you fell down, (for I will push you down,) and the caps tumbled out."

"Fie, Miss Agnes! would you tell a falsehood?"

"If I pushed you down, and upset the box, would that be a falsehood? Show me your ring, for we want to play."

"It is an old brass ring," said Julia Leonard.

"Or perhaps pewter, with a glass stone in it," Agnes answered with a mocking laugh.

"No, Miss, it is real whole gold. Mrs. Hosmer says so."

"Let us see it a moment."

"I must not take it off, for fear you will lose it."

"What if I do? I suppose you can get another, if you are rich enough to have gold

rings. I shall just tell Mrs. Hammond she need not give you all Ellen's old clothes ; because you spend your money for things that such beggars as you ought never to have touch your hands."

Poor Bessie ! She did not dare say she found the ring, for that would take all the merit away, as she thought, of her having any thing like Agnes. She could not say another word, and was going away, when Agnes stopped her.

" If that is a gold ring, Bessie, take it right off, and let us see it. I don't believe but you stole it, and I will cry stop thief, if you do not take it off this minute."

" Please, Miss Agnes, be careful, for —— "

" For what ? You are afraid we shall tell of you."

" Oh, no ! I never did steal it in the world, and —— "

" And what ? See how red she is ! I will tell of you, and have you punished."

Just at that moment, fortunately for poor

Bessie, our friend Ella was passing by, and seeing the parties, feared some difficulty. She joined them; Agnes said —

“Who would have thought, Ella Everett, your beggar girl was a thief also? See! she has stolen some one’s gold ring!”

“No, I have not, Miss Ella, and I will tell you all about it, if you will please to wait while I run over to Mrs. Jonquill’s with these caps. It will take but a few moments. I was going to see your mother about it to-morrow. And I did not steal it, Miss, truly.”

“Some one gave it to you, then,” said Ella.

“No, Miss, but I will come right back.”

“I will wait for you.”

Bessie soon returned, saying, “she did not wait for Mrs. Jonquill to open the box.” And as she went away with Ella, Agnes said, “I will not forget to tell Mrs. Hammond, that you wear gold rings, and do not need Julia’s old clothes.” The girls then ran off. Poor Bessie opened her whole heart to Ella; she knew it would make no difference to her what

she had on. Besides, so natural and true are the impulses of childhood, she felt somehow or other she had done wrong, and Ella would tell her where. Children love to be true, and easily, very easily, learn to love good better than evil, if the good is only rightly subjected to their minds. Bessie felt that Ella was good, and she did not wish to appear other than she was to her.

“I was going to get you to ask your mother what I should do with the ring,” said Bessie, after repeating all her troubles of the day.

“I will tell her, when I go home, but it is getting to be late, and you say ‘your grandmother wished you to come home soon.’ So, in the morning, if you can call at our house, I think my mother will see you, and say what is best to be done.”

“Thank you, Miss Ella, you are always kind to me, but Agnes is making fun of me whenever I meet her.”

“Good bye, Bessie, I cannot stop to say any more to-night. Your grandmother may

feel anxious, and the time is so long to her, because she can't see any thing."

The children parted, and Ella felt that Bessie had not done exactly right, but she thought her mother could tell where she was wrong..

CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning found little Bessie at Mrs. Everett's door, early seeking admittance. Her grandmother felt worried about the ring, and sent the child as soon as she could spare her.

Ella was with her mamma, and after Mrs. Everett heard the whole story again from Bessie, she asked —

“Ella, what was wrong in the first place about this matter? Think, my child.”

“I suppose, mother, Bessie ought not to have wished to wear the ring to plague Agnes, or to appear smart to her. I do not think Bessie felt it was wrong.”

“It was wrong, children. Sit down before me, and I will tell you why. Bessie returned evil for evil, and that is always wrong. Agnes

is not kind to Bessie, and Bessie wished to resent that, by being unkind to Agnes. Do you understand?"

Bessie felt the reproof, and hung her head.

"Then Bessie felt proud, and wanted to appear smarter than, situated as she is, she ought to appear, and that was wrong. It led Bessie into trouble. She has been punished already, and I fear will meet with more trouble yet, for not being true and single-minded. I see that Bessie feels sorry, and did not know how much wrong she was doing. But now she does know, and will be wicked, if she does so again. The ring she should have given to her grandmother to keep, until she had endeavored to find an owner for it. Bessie should not think of any other reward, but that of being obliging, and giving pleasure to another, and that is a great reward in itself. I will send an advertisement to the paper, and do all I can to help you, Bessie, if you will try to remember what I now say.

Ella, cannot you tell Bessie what it is to be single-minded?"

"I will endeavor to, mamma. It is to be true, always to speak what we really believe to be true; and not on any account, or to save us from punishment or trouble, to tell a falsehood. Seeing only, as you told me one day, 'either a great No, or Yes, on the guide-board.' Not to walk in any other path than the plain one of truth. First to think, then to act. And if I did not know the right direction, not to be ashamed, but to humbly ask of those who had more experience in true knowledge."

"Bessie, do you understand Ella this time?"

"Yes, ma'am. But Agnes told me if Mrs. Jonquill asked about her caps, to tell a story. Does not Miss Agnes know what it is to be single-minded?"

"Perhaps she does not, but you do now, and you must take care of yourself, and not think hardly of others; you may be richer in

this knowledge now than Agnes, but it must not lead you to be proud, but to be humble and sorry for those who are not so fortunate as you are. True knowledge is a great blessing, giving us riches that will never be taken from us, if we would keep them in our possession. Bessie, come here, child; are you sorry for having done wrong?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you see you have done wrong?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Now, Bessie, are you willing to prove to me that you also feel you have done wrong, and wish to do better?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"The first time, then, that you see Miss Agnes, will you tell her of your fault; that you found the ring, and was going to return it, if you could find the owner?"

"I will, ma'am, but ——"

And Bessie looked red, and hesitated.

"But what, Bessie?"

"Miss Agnes will plague me more than ever, and laugh at me."

“You must not mind the consequences; you have done wrong, and must make all the return you can, by recalling the portion you are able to, or, Bessie, you are not really sorry, and may do so again. You must destroy this wish in your heart of wrong, or else it will eat up the good intentions you now have, very fast.”

“I will try to obey you, Mrs. Everett.”

“Tell your grandmother what I have told you, and I think she will see it rightly, when you explain it all to her.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Ella, you may take Bessie in the kitchen, and show her your pretty robin, and go out and look at the new Bantam hens. Do not be gone long; and when you return, I will give Bessie a basket of provisions for her good grandmother.”

Here have we presented our third plant, and the soil thrown into its nourishment, chance evil, chance good, which shall triumph? The contiguity of various other roots adding

to or taking from its vitality. The plant is alive, but only in an undeveloped bud. Nature perfect, but needing man's sympathies to fulfil its destined attractions. Leaving our buds, we will see them again, just as the leaves begin to unfold, and foretell, in some degree, a truer idea of the flower that must soon follow.

CHAPTER VII.

To those of our readers who would have farther knowledge of the preceding chapters, let me say, Bessie found an owner for her ring, and was offered a reward. At Mrs. Everett's expressed desire she declined the favor; that lady thinking it more for Bessie's future good to feel the reward in her own heart, for having been allowed to give satisfaction to another.

Here let me remark, that the owner of the ring bestowed her favor upon Bessie's grandmother, and Mrs. Everett turned this to good account, by leading the child to really feel she had been of twofold service to others, by simply performing her duty.

Agnes Ray kept her promise by informing

Julia Hammond of the fact, that she had seen beggar Bessie with a gold ring on. She came very nearly depriving her of Mrs. Hammond's kind attentions, by leading that lady to think Bessie might be unfaithful; but being a judicious person, Mrs. Hammond looked attentively into the affair before she made her decision, and was then made acquainted with the truth.

Bessie, also, at Mrs. Everett's suggestion, went to Mrs. Jonquill's, and told her she had opened the box and displayed the caps to two little girls, who had tried them on their heads. Mrs. Jonquill was pleased with the child's candor, and gave her a penny. She had not observed the caps, as she was accustomed to have them on hand at a venture, and often sending them hither and thither, having them returned again.

When Bessie told Agnes, she first laughed at her, and called her cheating Bessie; still I think she felt abashed even before a little beggar girl, as she termed her, with gray calico

dress and leather shoes and strings; at least, we hope for her own sake she did, else we must all feel pity, and hope she will yet learn what is right.

CHAPTER VIII.

“MOTHER! dear mother! my beautiful tea-rosebud is beginning to unfold its lovely petal,” said Ella Everett, as she stood before her favorite bush. “Oh! I have watched its slow development almost daily. That slight yellowish hue seems to soften the clear white, making it as delicate as its chaste perfume.”

“It is very pretty, Ella, I cannot but acknowledge, my employment for a long time has been similar to your own; for I have also watched a bud unfolding its petals of humanity, and was this morning thinking the flowers would, before long, fulfil its promise. Yes, dear Ella! for sixteen years I have nurtured my little plant, and as I am permitted to see the blossom, I can no longer call it a bud. Its progress will be rapid now, either to satisfy or destroy our anticipations. You have

never passed many weeks from home, and always been under the same care; and to be good, and to do good, has been comparatively easy to my child. No strong temptations have assailed you to try the strength of your principles, or dissipate the life-giving sap, that has made you, thus far, morally healthy and happy. Your father's physical debility has made it necessary you should remain almost constantly with me."

"I know it, mamma, and I love my home very much. How patient papa is; with all his suffering from severe pain, he never complained."

"No, my dear. But it is not probable he will be with us in person much longer; yet the sweet fragrance of his memory will ever be grateful to our hearts. The physicians have decided he cannot recover, and your mother feels it her duty to be resigned to the will of Him 'who doeth all things well.' I must, therefore, ask the sympathy of my Ella, to be active in endeavoring to acquire a calm

and composed mind, looking rightly on the approaching change. We must not ask, dear, what we wish, that his precious life might be spared to us ; but in the full faith of the best wisdom being exercised, we must alone submit. I want you to think of this earnestly, my child."

"Dear mother, how very sad you make me ! Cannot papa possibly recover ? May we not grieve for him when he is gone ?"

"All grief is, in the abstract, selfish ; if we analyze our feelings, we shall see it is so. For our own loss we mourn ; we must not encourage this emotion, but look to the increased good of the beloved object. We do mourn, all of us, Ella, for our friends, because we have not arrived at that high state of progress which prevents our looking back, seeing the future only as a fair page, redeeming all recollections of the past. Will you try to be calm, dear, for the sake of those friends who so tenderly love their only child ?"

"I will pray, mamma, not to increase your sorrows."

CHAPTER IX.

It was a day of great preparation at Judge Ray's elegant establishment. Miss Agnes, now in her eighteenth year, was that evening to have her coming out-party, as it is termed. That is, she was to be introduced to the gay world by her mother, as one who had arrived at the necessary age, enabling her to be admitted among the fashionable circle, so often frequented by Mrs. Ray. Cards of invitation were issued to the favored set, in the united names of mother and daughter.

We all know the ferment caused in almost every house, by any such event as a large concourse of friends, either to dine or sup, particularly if an individual has the earnest desire to eclipse in novelty or splendor, any affair occurring before of like nature.

Mrs. Ray was ambitious, she was proud of her daughter's beauty and accomplishments; feeling it reflected credit upon herself, in this display of her own and only child.

The rarest flowers of the conservatory had been purchased, to gratify the eye of taste; the richest fruits and dainties for the table, and the exquisite strains of the Germanians, whose music alone would seem to be the embodiment of gratification to all the senses, whose sounds waft the sweetest fragrance of melody; this had been done, yet more was still required. The rooms must be dazzlingly brilliant with gas and candles, and then what should follow? Let us make a short visit behind the curtain, (altogether in confidence, dear reader.)

Miss Agnes had returned about three months since from Mrs. Alwin's fashionable seminary; she had finished off, but what she had finished, it was difficult to tell, except she had left school, and was to come out the ensuing winter. She played very well on the

piano, having a natural taste for music, could draw decently, wrote a lady-like hand, danced prettily, had a short acquaintance with the French language. We will not go farther into her examination; suffice to say, she was a delicate specimen of physical beauty, and her moral acquirements were even the most fragile of all. Nature had kindly circled her in the commencement of life, but she had disowned her close relationship, and so frequently coquetted with art, that the latter had fully usurped dominion over her. To the careless observer, Agnes was a beautiful flower, coming into full bloom through the forced influence of a fashionable conservatory.

“Mother, what shall I do? My dress sets horridly. The satin wrinkles all around my waist, and it is really awful!”

“Why, my dear child, I thought Miss R. said ‘it was a charming fit, and made your figure look splendidly.’ She must come and alter it, at all events, this morning. Send the maid directly for her.”

"She is engaged to Miss Allen, and I know she will not release her. Oh! what shall I do? I declare, I cannot wear it."

"Send, then, for Miss Jones, she will arrange all nicely, and come soon to me, Agnes, for you must be aware we have much to do; I wish to consult with you."

"Dear me, I don't care a fig for the party; I do wish it was all over. I shall not look well at all, I am certain."

"Never fear that, dear, speak to Jane immediately, and come down to the drawing-rooms."

"Why, wife, is not this affair drawing a little too largely on the bank stocks?" said Mr. Ray, coming into the rooms, and seeing the temporary building erected back of the parlors.

"Is it not fairy-like, husband?"

"Most too real to my senses, to partake very much of that character."

"Only remember, my dear, what a splendid party the Harolds gave when Anna came out;

and they have three daughters besides, while Agnes is our only child. You surely would not want to be outdone by the Harolds."

"You know best, wife, I suppose; don't forget, though, that we are mortals yet. Remember in your fancy region, that each fancy has its entail of dollars and cents appended, rather inconveniently dispensed with."

Mrs. Ray had displayed her woman-tact, in the answer given to her husband; she knew the foible of his mind, and at once addressed herself to the point. But of this very thing called tact, gentle reader, we have our doubts. It never seemed to us a very honorable or honest trait; though undoubtedly it is one that has rendered, what at the time appeared to be, great service to its owner.

"This is lovely, mother," said Agnes, "but what did father say? For Signor Chiavelli thinks it will cost much more than we anticipated. It is so expensive making the artificial fountains, and the exorbitant prices the gardeners demand for their flowering shrubs

and trees. Yet, will it not be exquisite? I so hope it will not get round. I am depending on the surprise."

What was this affair, claiming so much anxiety and attention? The parlors were to appear in their customary garb, only decorated with greater abundance of flowers, and so forth, usual on like occasions. Supper was to be announced at eleven o'clock, and on returning the guests passed from the drawing-rooms into a land, apparently, of eastern luxury. A large hall had been erected, and so surrounded with plants and trees, as to be a fine representation of an eastern clime. Painting had done its part, and sculpture enriched and artistified the whole. Unseen came the beautiful strains of music, floating, as it were, in the atmosphere around. It was a beautiful conception of the Italian artist. Here in this voluptuous hall was to be held the midnight dance. The musicians were concealed in an intricate arbor, in one of the alcoves of the hall. It was delightful in anticipation, and it

was not at all strange the young girl's heart should flutter, seeing the preparations going on. But all that was done, and still doing for Miss Agnes, did not take away thought from her own personal adornments.

"The japonicas for my hair, mother, have they come? I am afraid Madame Jalon will not arrange my front hair becomingly. If it does not suit me, I shall make her do it over again."

"Oh yes, darling! Madame will do her best. I will speak to her particularly."

The evening at length came, and many were the vexations poor Agnes tormented herself with. Her mind was in a most harassed state, and left its impress upon her countenance.

It was called a delightful party, by persons in general, quite a *recherché* affair. Two friends, more acute observers, spoke of it in the following manner:

"Julia, I should have enjoyed it, but I could not help looking at Agnes Ray's face,

she seemed so discontented. Did you not observe it?"

"I thought, Mary, she looked very handsome, and seemed exceedingly lively."

"She was altogether too gay, there was an effort apparent in all she did. I could not but pity her, envied as she is by some. I thought how little real satisfaction all this could afford; and she, with every thing to gratify her reasonable wishes, must see it is not the like of these that will give true happiness."

"Oh, Mary! you do moralize so on all occasions. But you know Agnes has only been educated for fashionable life, and if she cannot find enjoyment there, what is she to do?"

"That is the trouble. Her mother is not an ill-meaning person, but she seems to see only one side of life; having for so long a period basked in uninterrupted sunshine herself, she forgets the cloud that must sooner or later shadow all of us. A kaleidoscope of fashion, changing with each turn of

that agent's hand. What can we expect of a child educated to carry out this idea?"

"That is true. Poor child! How unfortunate! What weighty responsibilities rest upon the mother! Is it not really appalling to think of them? Do you suppose Agnes has any conception of another life than this? Do you presume she feels any moral obligation?"

"I do not think she allows herself to reflect; and I feel sure her knowledge on such subjects is extremely limited. She attends church Sabbath mornings with her parents, as a matter of course, but farther than the appearance of the body present, I do not think she is any wiser for so doing. This outward form, I fully believe, is the only religious cultivation she has ever experienced. And this but as a ceremonial law."

"The truth is, Mary, she has been taught to think of herself, as if *she* was to be gratified, at all events. Now, the principal thought she has, is for, and concerning, Miss Agnes Ray."

"I feel sure she was displeased the other evening, Julia; something had not exactly suited her waywardness. I judge so by her countenance when I first entered the room; you know we arrived before the others, coming from out of town, I came purposely earlier."

"Is she ill-tempered?"

"Not remarkably so. I should say she has naturally a good disposition. She was from a child indulged, never thwarted; now if the whole world will not bow or bend, she is unhappy."

"Selfishness, Mary, has mildewed the innate seeds of good; the bud was nurtured in unhealthy soil, too rich for its natural progress, blossoming too soon; its beauty of short duration, from disobedience to the great laws of our being."

The mother cultured this bud, and now rejoices in its brilliant bloom. Shall it last? Will its fruit be equally gratifying to the parent's heart? We shall see.

CHAPTER X.

"I AM so glad, Bessie, you have finished your time with Mrs. N., and she says, 'you can fit a dress equal to herself.' I always thought you had a taste for such things; you used to dress your doll quite smartly, when a child."

"Mrs. Hammond has sent for me to come there on Monday, again; you know, grandmother, I have worked three days already for her, and she is so much pleased, that she has recommended me to Mrs. Ray, to work for Miss Agnes; whom you know, (report says,) is soon to be married to Dr. Rivers, of New York city; quite a wealthy man, and very distinguished in his profession."

"Well, child, I am sure I'm glad, but I doubt if you could suit Mrs. Ray, or Miss

Agnes either; for they be mighty smart folks, and may-be remember you as little Beggar Bessie, and will feel you cannot do any thing decent enough for them."

"I have not seen Miss Agnes, until this winter, for six or seven years. I do not think she recognised me when I met her; at least she did not appear as if she had seen me ever before. Mrs. Hammond is very kind to me, so are the young ladies, and they are as rich as Mrs. Ray; but somehow they don't make such a fuss about it, and take it so quietly; one feels very easy to be with them, and forgets they are so much richer than one's self. Mrs. Hammond often gives me good advice, similar to what Mrs. Everett used to. She says, 'I must be very honest and truthful; for I shall have all kinds of persons to get along with, if I am much employed; for I shall be admitted into the privacy of families, and it would be very wrong in me to repeat stories from one house to another. But I should attend to my business strictly, and if I heard

things I must keep them all to myself.' Is not that rather hard, grandmother?"

"Yes, child; yet I suppose you might tell *me* without any harm; you must not mention it to other folks, because Mrs. Hammond knows better than we do what is proper. She seems to be very kind to you, and has done much to make us as comfortable as we now are."

"She says, 'I need not pay her at present, the money she loaned me when I went to learn my trade, but to put by all we do not need for our expenses, and she will, when I have a decent sum, place it in a bank, where, in a few years, I shall have more given back to me; because they pay interest on it.'"

"What? you, my little Bessie, have money in a bank? That's a smart girl! Nobody can call you beggar, then, I'm sure."

Bessie's grandmother still considered her a child, and usually addressed her as such, though she was now a young woman grown; and, in appearance, a rosy-cheeked lassie,

with mirth and sunshine dancing from her black eyes, and smiling round her bright red lips. A good specimen of robust country beauty. She was seemingly well; through all the storms of life this bud had struggled into bloom; rich in coloring, as if the varied influences of external effects had combined to render her attractive, as a genus of wild-flower beauty. Will the fruit possess the properties of cultivation? Will it be sweet or bitter? or drop off ere it is ripe?

CHAPTER XI.

“THREE years ago to-day, since dear father died. I went to his grave, yesterday, to see if the violets were not in bloom, mother, and one dear little bud almost promised me to come forth to-day ; so that our faith, of which it is the emblem, might be in blossom in our hearts ; feeling that God yet protects, and is near us, through all the struggles and difficulties of our life.”

“My dear Ella, I should be very ungrateful, if I did not feel faith, hope, and love as evergreens in my heart, when I experience from day to day the great treasure my Heavenly Father has given me in my child. Let us not murmur while we are permitted to toil together, but feel it a discipline we both needed. Though Our Father seemeth to chasten,

it is only through great love and mercy to us, that we are afflicted. We must try to feel your father is still present, and our interests are yet his. At least, this is a pleasant faith. We know he is happier than suffering here in a mortal frame, for his last years were passed in almost continual pain. Do you read to Mrs. Oswald to-day?"

"Yes, mother, to Mrs. Oswald at eleven. At one, I go to Mrs. Green's, to give her children their music lessons; and from four until six, to give the Arnolds their lessons in drawing."

"Would, dear child, you had more leisure for yourself. Do you not feel weary?"

"No, mother, the variety of my occupations rests me; then walking from one place to another is refreshing, so I really think my health has improved. Within the last year I have gained strength, and feel stronger than ever before."

"How thankful should we be for that; my sight has become so dim, and this rheumatism

so continual, that I am not good for much myself; and you seem to do every thing that is necessary, so cheerfully, I feel ashamed to acknowledge I have any trials."

"The first two years, mother, after father's decease, were indeed hours of suffering. I was obliged to change my habits so materially, then the necessity of your privations constantly wore upon me, but now I fully realize its significance. 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be.'"

"Do you enjoy reading with Mrs. Oswald?"

"Extremely, her husband having been a wealthy clergyman, had a fine library, and I am so interested, I forget the task, finding only pleasure; as Mrs. O.'s selections are generally good, I anticipate the enjoyment."

"Has her son returned from college?"

"He graduates this year, and is then to enter the Divinity School at Cambridge."

"Do you often see him?"

"He comes into town Saturdays, and once or twice has been present during my reading;

for Mrs. Oswald would not permit an interruption, considering my time too precious to be trifled with. I wish all my patrons were as delicate on this point; for truly, my hours are of great importance to me. I must say, I felt a little timid at first, when Arthur came in, but I knew duty required my proceeding, and as I went on, I almost wholly forgot him. He is so gentlemanly and unobtrusive in his manners, one is soon reconciled to his presence."

"How is it in drawing?" Mrs. Arnold has only those little girls, I believe; you have no young gentleman to interrupt there."

"Why, mother, I think you incline to be jocose with me."

"No, dear, I only smiled at the deepened tint of my fair flower, as she truthfully imparted her information."

"Mrs. Arnold's children try me some; for one of them has not the least idea of what the pencil can do, but makes a mockery of its feeblest attempts. It seems to me singular,

parents persist in learning their children, or, to speak more truly, trying to learn, those accomplishments, wholly incompatible with their desires and tastes. Julia Arnold is a wild little girl, who has not patience even to acquire patience to draw one line correctly. She is so indulged at home, self-government is unknown to her. If she feels in a displeased mood, it has, as yet, been impossible for me to offer any inducement for her improvement. Jane has some taste, and makes up in a measure for my otherwise unprofitably spent time. So you see there is a balance sheet there, mother, even without a young gentleman."

"Now for the music. Have the Greens any conception of the sweetness of true melody? Their life has been passed in such constant discord, one would think harmony was never heard of there."

"Minna Green, mother, has one of the richest voices I ever heard. She is very fond of music, but it has an unhealthy action upon

her. She has only the one idea without restraint; it is not fortified by judgment and reason; music, as a passion, seems to influence her. She prefers the Italian to all other styles. She is soon to take lessons of a master, and the little girls to continue with me; they have not yet evinced much taste. But to go back to Minna, she said to me the other day, ‘Miss Everett, my highest idea of Heaven is one great Italian opera company, made perfect in their art. A myriad orchestra, with God for their leader, the instruments incapable of discord, and the performers white-robed angels; their whole souls thrilling with melodious measure, rising and falling in unsurpassed strains of exquisite melody. Would it not be blissful? Can you conceive of any thing more like Heaven?’”

“Why, mother, I looked at her in astonishment; her face was perfectly beaming with enthusiasm. Should you not feel the effect of music upon her unhealthy; absorbing all other influences, making all else subservient

to that one exquisite dream of this lower sphere? For I am certain, dear mother, the imperfect idea of music we have here, is but a dream, whose realization may be acknowledged in the next life, amid the developments that will be admitted as we progress in our ability to receive them."

"I do think, as I have always told you, Ella, the cultivation of any one individual attainment, to the entire exclusion or detriment of all others, is a fault. We may have a decided preference, but to wholly personify one's self with one subject, is to deprive the other powers of their natural demands upon our sympathy; thereby wronging our natures very materially. It is singular Minna should have imbibed this taste, when, from the disagreement of her parents on most subjects, their home has been any thing but one of harmony."

"You remember, mother, Minna passed a period with Mrs. Pelt, in New York, from her fifteenth to her eighteenth year; the time

when she was most likely to be easily impressed with the lights and shadows of her life. She constantly attended the opera, and heard little else morning, noon, and night, but that and its concomitants, rehearsed over and over again. But I must away now, it is half past ten, and I cannot keep Mrs. Oswald waiting."

"It is Saturday, also, Ella."

Mrs. Everett, the reader will see, had been a widow for three years, and her own health was rapidly declining. Ella had been her support, her comfort, and constant attendant. They had been obliged to relinquish house-keeping, and now boarded with a small private family, in accordance with their means. Though sorrow had been theirs, yet joy beamed above the shade, purer and brighter than if all had passed in sunshine. Mrs. Everett was beginning to reap the fruit she had so faithfully and prayerfully cultured. And the discipline had made more healthy,

the object of her care. But the fruit must ripen, and we firmly wish the mother may gather in the full harvest of her hopes, ere she also passeth away.

CHAPTER XII.

“How strange it is! Ella Everett looks so well and blooming. I met her the other day, and was doubting in my own mind whether or no to acknowledge her as an acquaintance, now she had become so reduced, and obliged to earn the support of her mother and herself. But she looked up, and smiled so sweetly, I bowed before I had made up my mind. I do think, mother, she looked handsomer than ever, and very happy also.”

“It is strange, Agnes. Her father never possessed much but his salary, his library, and book-knowledge; but they had such a genteel manner, and made so respectable an appearance, together with his being a clergyman, admitted them into our circle. I have not seen Ella this long time.”

“ You know, mother, she reads to Mrs. Oswald, the rich widow, whose husband was also a clergyman; and scandal says her son is in love with Ella, but I do not believe a word of it. Of course Mrs. Oswald would dismiss her at once, for her presumption, if such was the case.”

“ Indeed! Arthur! Why he is the very handsome young man who bowed to you yesterday.”

“ Yes, and so wealthy! He will inherit all his mother’s possessions that she received from her father, one of Philadelphia’s richest merchants.”

“ When do you expect Mr. Rivers on from New York?”

“ Thursday, at farthest. He wished to be here at least three weeks before our marriage. Do you think he has as stylish an air as Arthur Oswald, mother?”

“ Oh, yes, dear child; his family are very aristocratic. I am sure his bow alone is enough to captivate one; and then his estab-

lishment is faultless. You will be able to give entertainments to your heart's content."

"I hope so, for sometimes I think he is rather tiresome. You know he is eighteen years older than I am."

"That is of no consequence, child. He is delighted and charmed with you; and men at his time of life are generally proud of their young and handsome wives, and more indulgent, by far, than one of your own age."

"Well, I suppose I must marry sooner or later, and it does not make any great difference I believe, who the personage is, provided he hath the requisites specially needed. I have ever heard, marriage was a lottery."

"Agnes, have you seen that Miss Greene Mrs. Everett spoke to you about? I would like you to engage her to finish off three silk dresses next week."

"Who do you think she is, mother? You remember a little girl I used to call Beggar

Bessie, years ago. It is her. She has learned her trade, and is so successful, she is in constant demand. I heard the Harolds were delighted with her, and I certainly never saw the Hammond's dresses fit so exquisitely before. I was afraid to trust her when Mrs. Hammond spoke a few months ago concerning her. But she has acquired such a reputation, I will endeavor to see her this morning."

"You must engage her to remain, if possible, a week. She can have a room in the servants' hall, and we have much to do."

"I fear she will not leave her grandmother, at night; but I will go, for those dresses must be done, at all events. I shall call at Madame Honfleur's, to see if her imported hats have arrived. And, mother, I wish you would ask father for another hundred. I have spent all but the last five-dollar note, of the money before given me. You know, mother, I must have the handsomest bridal hat, no matter what is the expense."

"Did not your father say one thousand was all he should give you, for your wardrobe, solely? And you have already trespassed a hundred over that."

"I cannot help it, mother; shop-keepers demand such exorbitant prices. I must have another hundred, come what may."

"Well, dear, we will see. But your father has lavishly expended in purchasing your furniture and other necessities."

"I know all that, still I must have the hat; it will be an expensive affair, but you would not wish any person to have a handsomer one than your own, only child, when she left you, on becoming a bride."

"No, Agnes; you must have that, at all hazards; of course you must have the hat."

The daughter had used the same tact towards her mother that the latter had to her husband, on a former occasion, and sympathetically touched a responsive chord. Thus, was this mother unable to control the wishes

of her child; she had imbibed nourishment from the parent stem, and this flower was beginning to yield the customary fruit of such an unhealthy organization.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ I HAVE been four days at Mrs. Ray’s, and I am almost tortured to death. Miss Agnes is so haughty and imperious. Her mother is actually a slave. She asks me so many questions about the most minute affairs, of everyday life at the Harolds. I do believe there is some jealousy or pique there. Then, I worked for Mrs. Oswald, you remember, grandmother, and Miss Agnes asked such impertinent questions about Miss Ella Everett and Mrs. Oswald’s son. I really did not know what to do, for she insisted upon an answer, and does not seem to think the world was made for any one but herself.”

“ I am sure I pity you, childy, but there’s curious folks in the great world, and one has to keep a stout heart to get along.”

"I am sure I do not envy Mr. Rivers, grandmother."

"No, child; it is wicked to be envious."

"I mean, I am glad that it is not me that is going to live with Miss Agnes. And Mr. Rivers seems to consider her only as a pretty plaything."

"Why, Bessie, that's a queer thing! In my day, men, and rich men too, wanted good capable girls to keep their houses neat and savingly; but a-lack a-day, I suppose the world is going round differently now-a-days."

"Mr. Rivers seems proud of Miss Agnes, of her handsome face; but I am certain they will not have a very happy time after marriage, when it begins to be an old story."

"That would be a great vexation. Dear me! How much trouble rich folks have!"

"Now, grandmother, I work as steadily at Mrs. Hammond's, but I never come back so weary and unhappy from there. What can be the reason?"

Unfortunate plant! Chance evil, chance good, the influence yet over thee. Doubtful, still, the flavor of the fruit. To some it will be bitter, to others more palatable.

CHAPTER XIV

“WELL, dear Ella, what shall I say? Mr. Oswald’s letter must be answered to-day. He is settled in New York, and has now waited a long time for your decision. His character is excellent, and you know how worthy he is, yet you have but one question to ask yourself. Do you sincerely love him? Be candid towards me, as you have ever been. I have not understood you exactly, in this affair, for he has his mother’s warm approbation of his choice; and I feel I can leave you entirely to your own decision. Speak, dear Ella!”

“Yes, mother, I have long loved Arthur. His many virtues, and deep devotion to his only parent, won my respect and love. My hesitation arose wholly, mother, on your account. Though Arthur kindly insists upon

your making your home with us, I feared you would miss that independence of feeling you now possess. But, on reflection, I know not as it may be so, for you will gain another child to love and reverence you. Arthur is worthy of all that is good."

"Sufficient, dear. Allow me to answer by myself, now I have truly read your heart. I appreciate the delicacy of your sentiments regarding myself, and am certain so good a daughter cannot fail to make a loving and excellent wife."

In four month's time from the above, Ella Everett became the beloved bride of Arthur Oswald. She removed to the city of New York. Her mother accompanied her, and became a resident in her family. She is finely located in the upper part of the city, with all the comforts of life surrounding her. She feels grateful that her mother's declining years can be passed in a home of peace and plenty. Her marriage is one of true affection, based on mutual respect. A rare sympathy

exists between her husband and herself; for each seeks the good of the other, in preference to their own. They have been truly educated, blessing even as they are blessed.

CHAPTER XV.

IN New York city, for a year past, Mrs. Agnes Rivers had resided. Among the upper ten was her elegant mansion; for her husband was a fashionable physician, and, of course, in great demand. His fees also were fashionable fees to his patients, otherwise, among that class, his advice would have been altogether too cheap for their requirements. They could not have taken prescriptions of so little value.

The novelty of being a bride, and the parties made by Dr. Rivers's friends for her reception, so constantly engrossed Agnes for several months, that all things passed more evenly than was anticipated. But the time had come when each new dress had been twice displayed, and now a new array of finery

must be purchased. Next, a box at the opera, for the season. Continual were her demands for money. At first, her husband was liberal in his supplies, but the unceasing call alarmed him; he could not possibly account for the manner of its expenditure.

It was Agnes's most ardent wish to become a leader in the new circle she had entered, a fashionable criterion; in vain she struggled. Her most costly dress was, perhaps, rivalled the very first evening she introduced it to the public gaze. She employed the skill of the greatest connoisseurs on the subject she could find. But the wife of such and such a merchant prince had imported articles, excelling all she could procure at short notice, even at the most extravagant prices.

Dr. Rivers was a wealthy man, but there was an end to his riches, whereas, some among their circle would seem to have inexhaustible funds, from the almost unheard of dispersion of the same, by their wives and daughters;

each carrying a small fortune, merely in their personal habiliments.

The doctor one morning undertook, in a playful manner, to remonstrate with his wife:

“Agnes, dear, are you often ill?”

“Ill! What do you mean, doctor? Do you want a subject to try your skill upon? I thought your reputation was already established.”

“No, love. I was only thinking Allopathy would not do for you, that I must call in the aid of some Homœopathic practitioner. Nothing would suit you but pills of gold, and my fortune would soon be dispersed in common-sized pills; I thought if they were sugared pellets, it might hold out for a longer period.”

“I do not understand the point of your remarks.”

“Well, dear Agnes, to throw off all disguise, I certainly think you must find it somewhat of a task to spend so many dollars and cents as you daily require. Is it not wearis-

some sometimes? Do you never reflect that means may become exhausted, and of the ensuing consequences?"

"If Doctor Rivers cannot support his wife, as her station demands, she will return to her parents, who, thank Heaven! never yet degraded her by a refusal. I wait your reply, sir."

"Agnes, this language ill becomes a wife. Have I not, as yet, gratified your most unreasonable requests? It is impossible for me to do so much longer. You anticipate giving a party soon. I am willing and desirous you should return the civilities of our friends; but it must be within our means. You cannot possibly vie with Mrs. Pelt, or Mrs. Van de Brunt. You must be satisfied in a less extravagant manner. I cannot meet the expense. You have lived in a country town, where your father was the wealthiest man in the neighborhood. You were his only child, and full scope was given to gratify your desires. Here, it is very different, and my

profession alone enables me to take rank with these Cæsars of the New World. I felt I must speak decidedly and truly, before it was too late."

"I have heard you through, sir, but it is too late, already. I have given my orders, and they must, and shall be carried out. I will not endure the mortification of recalling them for any whims of a superannuated husband, or to gratify your parsimonious disposition."

"Parsimonious! that is altogether too bad! Do I deserve it? Heartless woman! I cannot, and will not endure it longer."

"I will have it as I say; no one ever gainsaid me. So much for marrying a man eighteen years older!"

"It was at your option, madam, and you accepted with seeming pleasure my proposals of marriage. But you must listen to me in this affair; for prudence makes it necessary that I warn you in season."

"I shall go on with my arrangements, and

carry out this party, at all events. The concerns of the house belong not to you."

"I will not permit this, Agnes."

"You cannot help it this time, Doctor Meanness. Thursday evening the affair comes off, and it is now Tuesday. My matters are nearly complete, and invitations have been out over a week. While you were absent at the Medical Convention, in Philadelphia, I was actively employed in this concern,—and come off it shall. You cannot possibly lessen the expense now, if you wish. And I may as well tell you, that you can prepare a costume; it is to be a fancy ball."

"I cannot endure this treatment, Agnes. A masked ball in my own house; and I not even consulted on the occasion. You knew I disliked masquerades, exceedingly. I assure you, this conduct has, and will meet my decided disapprobation. I would fain believe you innocent, and ignorant of the extent to which you carry your folly; and that excessive love of display is the demon usurping

all the better qualities of your nature. For this once, I will endeavor to forgive. But I tell you, in sober earnest, I fear the result, and the necessary restrictions that must in time follow your course. Remember, and ponder over what I have said. You are young and thoughtless, and this is your first great offence."

Some evidence of Agnes's better nature appeared in a struggling tear, but pride recalled the dew-drop ere it fell; and even harsher were the tones that fell from her voice.

"Good morning, sir; I hope you have finished your insults for the present. After this party, I shall go to H. and visit my parents for a season; so you can replenish your purse more at leisure. I will not trespass on your valuable time longer; you have given me a dose that will be effectual, I assure you."

Dr. Rivers's eyes were fully opened, and regret was at the door of his heart, but Agnes's youth and beauty barred its entrance.

He hoped reflection would bring her right. Endeavoring to pacify his awakened anxiety, he went about his customary avocations.

Agnes was unhappy, yes, miserable, but she was not penitent. She could not bear opposition, and she imagined herself cruelly treated. She had no resources within herself, but the outward was her all, and that must be gratified, or life was of little value. She had made her husband anxious and thoughtful; vexed herself. And all who came within her sphere were made sensible of her irritability of temperament. Confusion and discord governed the whole household. This was the fruit from the seed of fashion. Is it tempting, dear reader?

CHAPTER XVI.

"WHO would have thought, grandmother, Mrs. Rivers could have made so much trouble! She told Mrs. Hammond that I said her daughter Julia was dying in love with Arthur Oswald, and I thought it of no use, for Ella Everett had completely cut her out. And I did not wonder, for Ella was very handsome, and Julia a fright."

"Why, Bessie, girl! what could you have said, that Mrs. Rivers should speak so? You know Mrs. Hammond was the very person who cautioned you to be careful."

"The day before Mrs. Rivers was married, granny, she asked me so many questions, and among them, 'If I did not think Julia Hammond liked Mr. Oswald?' I said, simply, yes, I think she does; and did not dream of

her making harm from it. She replied, 'But he is in love with Ella.' I answered, everybody knows that, and no person could cut out Miss Everett, she was so good and handsome. I also said, in answer to another question, that Miss Hammond was plain-looking. I declare, next time, I will not tell the truth, as I really think, if I am obliged to answer; for it seems so doing has made me displease one of my best friends."

"Poor child! How did you hear of it?"

"I was in at Mrs. Jones, the milliner's, and Mrs. Harold's parlor girl came in there; she told me she overheard Miss Louisa telling her mother about it, and what Miss Julia Hammond had said also. 'That she knew she was very plain, and did not care so much for being called a fright, though she thought even that was unkind, after they had manifested so much interest in me. But she did think it very wrong that I should say she was in love with any person.' Miss Louisa also told her

mother that I thought Miss Julia and Miss Ella, that was, would not continue such friends now; and I never thought a word of the last thing, grandmother."

"It is a great pity you went to Mrs. Ray's at all; you seem to have had only trouble and worry about it. But, bear up, Bessie, the skein will be disentangled by and by."

"I do really believe I hate Mrs. Rivers. She did nothing but scold and fret, all the time I was there. I was glad she went to New York to live, and I guess her parents feel relieved any how, though her mother does lament the loss of 'her great treasure, and is so very lonely without her.'"

"Bessie, I am afraid you are wrong, child. I know you must not hate any one, but must 'love your enemies.' I don't exactly know, Bessie, but somehow, I'm thinking if you go right down to Mrs. Hammond, and tell the whole truth, that she will feel kinder towards you."

"Dear me! I'm ashamed to. Bridget said,

‘she guessed I’d lose custom by telling stories round, for Mrs. Hammond was offended with me.’ I’m sure, I did not mean any harm. I expect I shall hear I have spoken of Mrs. Harold’s domestic affairs, next. For Miss Agnes, as was, kept asking me, ‘if they were not very mean in their household, and sparing in their provender?’ She asked such little questions, as ‘What they had for dinner; and the wages of the servants; and what they had to live upon.’ I dare say, I answered some things truly. Now, I should not wonder if that was worked up against me; for Mrs. Rivers did not like the Harolds. I don’t know what to do. I’ve a mind to go and see Mrs. Everett; if she tells me to go to Mrs. Hammond, I will, granny.”

“That’s right; Mrs. Everett would know. She will excuse you for troubling her, for old acquaintance sake. Stop, Bessie! Mrs. Hammond has your money in a bank, too. Deary me! What trouble! Miss Agnes has always been your evil star; but she’s married, and

gone far away. But who's that knocking at the gate?"

"It is Sambo, Mrs. Harold's coachman. What can he want?"

"Missus is in the carriage, and wants to see Mrs. Greene."

"Ask her to come in."

"How do you do, Mrs. Greene?" I am Mrs. Harold. I presume you have heard of me through your grandchild?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I have been much pleased with Bessie, heretofore, and her work has always been well done. I have come on a very different errand from usual, a very unpleasant one; but I felt it my duty. I called at Mrs. Hammond's first, and she could not give me any encouragement to think I might be mistaken. She had always spoken so highly of Bessie, herself; and her daughter Julia it was who recommended your grandchild to our notice. I have heard, Mrs. Greene, she has spoken ill of our family, and even told untruths concerning our private af-

fairs. But there is a more serious charge yet. Yet, let me first tell you, that Mrs. Rivers told my daughter Louisa, what Bessie said about Miss Hammond, and she had told Miss Julia a few days before, the reports Bessie circulated against our family. Putting the two stories together, we all felt rather indignant at Bessie's conduct. It so happened, the last time we employed Miss Greene, my daughter received a very beautiful little ebony casket from a friend who was going to reside abroad. It was a parting gift. It contained a gold thimble and bodkin, gilt scissors, and all things costly and delicate, usually found in such articles. The thimble was marked with their initials. Bessie was there when it came, and was not out of the room after, to our knowledge, until she left to return home. The casket stood before her upon the table in our nursery, and a small gold coin sent to be always retained as a keepsake, or luck-piece, as her friend jokingly said, was with the casket.

Louisa intended to display these to her father, on his return from court at night. But when she carried down the box, the thimble, bodkin, and coin were missing. We felt badly about it, and thought over the events of the day. My daughters as well as myself felt certain Miss Greene had not left the chamber, for we came up from dinner before she went down to hers. We questioned Bridget, who has lived three years in our family, and is faithful and honest. She said, 'She was sure Miss Greene had not left the room, for she told her in the morning she must work very steadily to finish Miss Louisa's dress for the party.' She also said, 'Miss Greene had sly ways; she had noticed her looking at the toilet articles before, and thimbles and bodkins would not come amiss to her; faith, she guessed who took them.'"

Bridget was allowed to speak more familiarly than persons generally in her situation, for she had been induced to act as parlor and chamber girl united, for a small advance on

her wages in the first capacity. Therefore, she felt she was conferring a favor, and took more liberty on that account. It was difficult to get a domestic to act thus, in so large a house, and Mrs. Harold thought she had a treasure.

The first pause Mrs. Harold made, Mrs. Greene broke out in loud tone —

“What do you mean, ma’am? I was always told never to speak when folks were talking. But I must ask you, what do you mean, ma’am? My Bessie was telling me to-day something about some stories that was’nt true neither, and I reckon she be gone about ’em now, seeing she is out of the way.”

“Out of the way! Only another evidence of her guilt. She dared not meet me, but she shall restore the articles, or I will bring her to justice.”

“What things? Do you mean, ma’am, to say my Bessie, little Bessie Greene, that has taken all the care of her poor blind grand-

mother, and got money in the bank beside, — Do you mean to say she has your gold follies? Tut, ma'am; I shall forget my manners, if you use such wicked language to me. It is false. And she is gone now either to Mrs. Everett or to Mrs. Hammond to tell the truth, as she told it to me. And she never said a word about your things, and knows no more than a wee baby about them. Let any body call my Bessie a thief, and she money in the bank too."

"I am sorry for you, my good woman, and wish I could believe, as well as you, your grandchild's honesty. But I must find the missing articles; it is my duty. I shall act farther. Can I look among her things in your room?"

"No, ma'am; you shall not wrong my good child by such an insult, unless she is willing herself. Though I am blind and feeble, I will call in help from the other rooms, if you do not wait until she comes. Bessie, Bessie! where are you? poor orphan lassie!"

"She is coming, and with her Mrs. Everett. Now, see if she is bold enough to deny this."

"Sambo, take the carriage to Mrs. Hammond's, and request her from me to drive here, on a matter of importance. I wish to see her or Miss Julia."

"Yes, missus. But Miss Louisa is in the carriage; she has finished her shopping."

"Ask her to come in; she can remain here."

"Oh! my poor Bessie! Mrs. Oswald, our good Miss Ella, that was, has known Bessie from a six year older. She'd make you ashamed of this day's work, ma'am. For, when little Bessie was called beggar girl, and the like, by that wicked Mrs. Rivers, she would cry and wonder; but she never stole, then, and would she steal now, when she has money in the bank? Mercy on ye, ma'am, for fretting a poor body so; you have brought the rheumatis all over my poor old limbs, and set me shaken with the shivers. Ye better

look to them folks at home, so ready to accuse others."

"How do you do, Mrs. Harold? I am so glad you have not left. I feared we should be too late. I only reached home a short time since, where Bessie was awaiting me. She told me you were here, and had asked to see her grandmother, supposing you did not wish her presence by that, she came to me; thinking you might have heard from Mrs. Rivers a different version of what she said concerning your family, than what she actually did say. Telling me, also, what she said, and why she spoke at all. And about the stories connected with Miss Hammond."

"Bless my heart, dear Mrs. Everett! I should have interrupted any one but you, and you taking all the pains to come up here. But Heaven will bless you! Folks or no folk, I must out with it. She says 'Bessie's a thief!' a thief, ma'am! yes, my own good little Bessie!"

Poor Bessie! this was a new accusation; she looked pale and trembling, and seemed deprived of the power of speech. Mrs. Everett immediately answered, perceiving her surprised state.

"I am really astonished, Mrs. Harold. What does this mean? I can, if I know aught of human nature, assure you, there is some mistake, some great mistake. I have known Bessie from a little child. She has often shared my advice with Ella. I feel convinced she would not take what belonged to another, without their permission, whatever other imprudence, she might, from want of reflection, commit. Look at that face? has guilt a resting place there? Mrs. Harold! Miss Louisa! what does this mean?"

Mrs. Harold recapitulated her tale; after hearing her to the end, Mrs. Everett said:

"I still am as firm in the belief of Bessie's innocence, as I was before. Will you, my dear madam, allow me two days ere you proceed in this business. I am interested that my

friend, Miss Louisa, should recover her lost articles. I am also interested in this poor girl's recovering her character. Hold me responsible for all. You surely know me well enough, not to doubt my good intentions, and my wish to do, as nearly as I can, what is right. Bessie, what do you say to this charge against you?"

Mrs. Everett's voice attracted the girl's eyes towards her, but she looked like one bewildered, so astounding was this whole affair to her.

"Bessie, speak, and answer Mrs. Everett. Where are you, grandchild? Oh, ma'am, may-be you have stolen away her senses. Who's the thief, then?"

This seemed to arouse the girl, who answered, "Perhaps Mrs. Harold will not believe me, but I will tell the truth, and that is all I can do. I only saw the things in the casket, as Miss Louisa kindly showed them to me, after she received it. The box was closed upon the table the rest of the day, and

I thought no more of it. But Mrs. Harold is mistaken, I did go out of the room, which I suppose, was wrong; but Bridget so urgently asked me to look at a dancing monkey in the yard, which I could see from a back chamber window, that I did, though only for a moment. I refused her once or twice, telling her I had as much as I could possibly do to finish my work that day. This is all I know, or can say, ma'am. Mrs. Everett will inform you all I told her. Bridget said to me that day, 'She was going to leave your house next week, to live with a cousin of hers, but she should not tell you of it, until she had her wages, you were so very stingy.' I should not have mentioned this now, only she spoke so falsely of me. I do not know as I ought to have told you; but I truly cannot tell when to speak and when to be silent."

Again we say, poor Bessie! Is the fruit to be broken off ere it ripen? It surely is in danger. Some careless hand may wan-

tonly destroy. Perhaps some gardener will in time take pity, and protect. Feeble plant! bending hither and thither, as the wind of circumstances affects thee.

CHAPTER XVII.

“New York, Nov. 4, 1850.

“DEAR MOTHER,—

“Our kind love, if you please, to Mrs. Ayres; Arthur and myself will, if possible, pass Thanksgiving with her. It will be pleasant, for old association's sake, to be again in my native town at such a time. I was sorry at the information you conveyed concerning Bessie Greene. My surprise would have been greater to know Mrs. Rivers could have so unkind a disposition, as to endeavor to cause difficulty between Bessie and her employers, had I not been aware of her dislike from childhood to the poor girl. Moreover, dear mother, she does not like Mrs. Harold's family, because they have occasionally out-rivalled her in her attempts to lead off first

every new fashion. And their father is yet but a lawyer, while hers has risen to the dignity of a judge. She thinks this increases her consequence. I heard her remark once, 'Poor persons should be kept in their station, and not allowed to come in contact with their superiors.' She has been so injudiciously educated, that wealth, and what she terms rank, are her idols, and her aristocracy is founded on a like basis. I pity her much, for report speaks unfavorably of her married life. But I know we must try to be lenient to the faults of those who have had unhealthy nutriment from childhood to subsist upon. I think Mrs. Rivers must feel regret, when she knows what trouble her conduct has caused old Mrs. Greene and her grandchild.

"You say, dear mother, that Mrs. Hammond came to Mrs. Greene's before you left. I was glad she listened to reason, and seemed to understand the case. She must have felt Bessie had done wrong in speaking imprudently, but she could not believe Bessie dishonest.

“Do write me, dear mother, farther particulars; you know I consider myself in some degree responsible for Bessie, because in early days she was, in a measure, under my influence.

“Shall you not return with us? We miss you exceedingly, but hope your enjoyment is enhanced, meeting some of your old friends in familiar intercourse again. It is cold, for the season, with us, and the aspect around heralds the approach of winter. We hope you are in your usual health. Our love to you, dear mother, from

“ARTHUR AND ELLA.”

“WORCESTER COUNTY, Nov. 8th, 1850.

“We are all glad, my beloved children, to think you can, with consistency, accept Mrs. Ayres’s kind invitation. I hope to see you next Wednesday.

“I will finish what I would have said, about Bessie Greene, in my last, had I not been interrupted, and obliged to close my

letter abruptly, or lose the opportunity of that mail.

“Mrs. Harold refused to believe Bessie’s innocence, but at my suggestion, consented not to make the matter public for a few days. We all told her the great wrong it might do the poor girl’s reputation, should she find she was unjust in her charge.

“Mrs. Greene was so much overcome, that it brought on an attack of her old infirmity; Bessie, also, was very sick at heart. I bade them take courage, and have faith that all would be ordered rightly, for their best good.

“I am enjoying all you desire for me. The beauty of the autumnal foliage is fast fading away, depriving the country of its brilliant aspect. I hope to return with you, though our friends urgently request a prolonged visit. The scenes here are fraught with memories sacred to both of us; and the place must have always a holy remembrance in our hearts; thus feels your affectionate mother,

“ANNA EVERETT.”

“To Arthur and Ella Oswald.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. RIVERS's party was among the things of the past. She had experienced little else but vexation, anxiety, and confusion throughout the whole affair. Her ruling passion to outdo others in style, cost her nothing but heaviness of heart in return for her lavish expenditure. She had disregarded the wishes of her husband, and caused a coolness of manner in their intercourse. She thought she would go home, and visit her parents for a season, hoping she might escape from her immediate self there, but it was all in vain. Her mother was disappointed to find her child so restless and unhappy, and inquired the cause.

“Why, mother, Mr. Rivers is so mean, I cannot endure it much longer. He was angry because I gave that masked ball. He

has been constantly retrenching in our necessary expenses ever since. I would not have married him for the world, had I known he was so miserly. I only returned the compliment his friends paid me. And he had the impudence to tell me 'He could not afford it; that I must consult him on such matters beforehand.' I told him, if he could not support me, I would return to my parents, and so I came to visit you. But you do not seem so glad to see me as I expected."

"I truly am glad to see you, dear Agnes, but I am sorry to hear what you have said. I cannot understand what you have related to me. You surely know your father's recent loss, and also to whom he is now indebted for even the little means we can at present command."

"Mercy, mother! what do you mean? How can father have lost his property? I thought him the richest man in the country."

"Is it possible, my child? what kindness,

what extreme delicacy in your husband not to have told you, and yet you accuse him of meanness."

"What can you mean? Pray, tell me about it? I cannot comprehend any thing; yesterday, Mr. Rivers urged me to wait a week before I came home, saying, 'The weather would be pleasanter then, and he might more conveniently give me funds.' But I ridiculed him, telling him I had yet sufficient of my father's bridal present to carry me to my native town; and when there, I could possibly ask charity of my parents. I remember now, that he colored, as I thought with anger, and left the room. I came away in the morning train, yesterday, and he probably did not return home until night, when I was half way on my journey hither."

"Oh, Agnes, Agnes! had it not been for Mr. Rivers, three weeks since, we should have been homeless, indeed; and now we are going to remove from this place. I could

not endure the mortification of meeting my old friends under existing circumstances."

"Oh, mother! it is just three weeks since I gave my great party. Mr. Rivers had been absent, as I thought, South."

"He had been here, child. He did not go to Philadelphia. Your father involved himself in a speculation, which entirely failed him. At the same time, he had indorsed a note of large amount, for an old friend, who had died insolvent; and all the resources your father had left, would not supply the demand. Your husband heard of his embarrassment, and came forward to assist us, which he most generously did. Your father could still have his salary, would he remain. He is not decided; but we are to remove immediately to some one of the many villages in this county, where we can find a cottage suited to our means. Then your father, if he wishes, can retain his situation, and avail himself of the railroad to go and come daily."

“A cottage! how horrible, mother! Why was not father more careful? It is too bad, and that is the reason Mr. Rivers made such a fuss about my party, and made me so unhappy.”

“Agnes! is that all you have to say of this matter? Have you no gratitude to your husband for his great kindness to your parents? Do you not feel guilty now in calling him mean? Do you not feel his kindness in keeping this trouble from you, until the worst of it was over? Oh, Agnes! I am to blame for not having taught you differently.”

“I am very glad Mr. Rivers helped you, mamma; but he should not have curtailed *my* expenses, if he did. He ought to have taken care of me first. I shall not give up my pleasures, I can tell him.”

“Is it possible! Oh, too late, my child, do I see my folly! Is your heart, your conscience so seared, that even your parents' misfortune is forgotten in your overwhelming regard for self? Agnes, heed me, I pray you!

for I am to blame for not having instructed you rightly. For your mother's sake comply with my request. Write to your husband immediately, ask his forgiveness for your conduct, and thank him, oh! thank him, for his generosity to us and yourself, in sparing your feelings."

"No, mother, I cannot tell him I am sorry; for that would be acknowledging I was wrong, and I cannot do that, and humble myself to his will."

"Hark! who is that?"

"It is Mr. Rivers, surely."

"Run, child, run, and thank him for your own sake; for your mother's sake."

"I am sorry, Agnes, you did not wait for me. I hurried my business to be able to accompany you, and have, I fear, lost quite a sum in so doing. I felt anxious, my dear Mrs. Ray, when I found your daughter had so abruptly left our house, and followed as soon as I possibly could do so."

"My child has done wrong, but forgive her;

I ask it, if she will not herself. She is young and thoughtless, and I now feel only too deeply, that I have wronged her, by the method pursued in her education. Agnes will herself see, on reflection, how much we all owe you."

"I have myself only to blame, madam, in thinking so much of your daughter's beauty and style; forgetting how many more important things were requisite, for one to make a suitable companion in the every-day cares and trials of life. I knew I had some property, and was successful in my profession, and I hoped to have made your daughter happy. But I must say, dear madam, her great love for excessive display has alarmed me, and my caution she seems to regard with disdain. But Agnes is still my wife, and as such, all I can reasonably do shall be done for her. At present, I am obliged to reduce, in a degree, some of our former useless expenses."

"My dear sir, and for us you have robbed

yourself; you are embarrassed because of your generous kindness. How can we repay you? Oh, Agnes, child! see the nobleness of your husband!"

"I do not see any great generosity in his depriving me of the necessities of life. I might as well die, as live shut out from society; and I cannot go into society without proper habiliments. I am very willing he should help father, but he might have saved enough for me first, to live at least decently."

"Agnes, Agnes! these tears speak my repentance, let yours mingle with mine, that I may not be entirely destroyed by remorse. Why was I so thoughtless in regard to your highest good? I, sir, am to blame. I was a votary of fashion, and in the same school instructed my child. She must see the little return it makes to those who worship at its shrine. Not until this morning, did I know how enslaved my better nature has been, but I have burst the bond asunder, and never, with the help of Heaven, will I be so shackled

again. But my poor Agnes! She has not strength yet to be free. A mother pleads to you in extenuation of her child, knowing the seeds she sowed in her young and guiltless heart."

"Do not feel so distressed, madam. I must now answer the last remark your daughter made. Agnes, in helping your parents I thought I could do you a greater favor than in any other way. They who gratified every desire of your heart from childhood to the time you left them for my protection; those to whom you owe your very being, could you be willing to bask in the empty frivolities of life, and see them suffering for aid? No, my wife! I will not believe there is a daughter so inhuman. I have yet a comfortable home for you, the same you left, and should be happy to have your mother return, and remain as long as is convenient to her, while your father settles his affairs. But I cannot now give either dinner or supper parties, to outrival our neighbors and friends. Neither

can I waste my money on five-hundred dollar shawls, or thirty-dollar pocket handkerchiefs. What I mean is, it is absolutely necessary for me to live within my income, or I shall soon be unable to call our house my home. Understand me rightly, Agnes; it is not meanness, it is necessity. You surely can be happy with what we now have, and your present wardrobe would last some women their lives."

"My present wardrobe! Do you think, Mr. Rivers, I am going back to New York, to resume my last year's garments? I can tell you I shall do no such thing. What would Mrs. R. and Mrs. W. say? How they would triumph over me, they looked so envious when I came out with this new hat, and I have already worn it two months. Do you think, sir, I would, on any account, wear my last year's hat the ensuing winter? Nothing would tempt me to. I had rather go into a nunnery, than be laughed at by such people as they are. Besides, I have en-

gaged Madame D'Arblay to secure the richest winter hat for me, at her opening next month. But that is a small item, only thirty-five, or forty dollars. Then Allenby is engaged to cut my winter dresses. And I have no doubt, some new style of shawl or mantle will be in vogue, and have these I must, or I never return to New York."

"Oh, my child! how you distress me!"

"Well, I am sorry, mother, but now you and father are not in so much trouble, you might think of me. Just imagine how the Misses N. would ridicule me, if I wore my old clothes. I have made all manner of fun of them. Why, I have some dozen of hats at home now, that are hardly soiled; but of what possible use are they, if not in fashion?"

"Can I see your husband, madam? I feel it my duty to be true, and tell him the exact situation I am placed in. I wish Agnes to decide, if she will return with me or not. I do not wish her to embarrass your present

state. Perhaps, together, you can come to an agreeable arrangement. I will go to your husband's office; you say he is probably there."

Poor mother! Still vainly pleading with her child. Selfishness concealed in the bud, had burst into full blossom in the flower. What else could we, can we, expect from the fruit, but that it should be unpalatable to the partaker?

CHAPTER XIX.

"HERE is Mrs. Oswald, grandmother, coming up to our gate. She is only to be a week in town. Is she not kind to remember us?"

"Open the door, quickly, Bessie."

"Mrs. Greene, I am glad to see you so much better; you look nicely."

"Thank you, kindly, Miss Ella; beg your pardon, Mrs. Oswald. But old folks can't get used to new names for old friends; all's one, however."

"New names do not change one's friends, my good Mrs. Greene. And Bessie, I have come for you to tell me all about your troubles, I was so glad to hear you were proved innocent of the theft. I could not for a moment believe you guilty. But I was sorry you had allowed yourself to speak, in the

least manner, slightly of your employers. You must have firm principle for your guide, or you will always waver from the right course when temptations assail you. But tell me all about it."

"On the evening of the day that Mrs. Harold accused me, a man called at her door, and asked to see Mrs. H. alone. He then told her, an Irish girl came the night before to his master's store, wishing to dispose of a gold thimble as it was too small for her, and had been given to her by a friend. Mr. R. offered her four dollars for it, which was not half its value, as it was new and curiously wrought, as well as highly finished. She eagerly accepted his offer. Mr. R. wrote on a slate for me to go out, unperceived, and follow the young woman home, before he concluded his bargain with her. I went, and remained concealed in an alley until she passed by, and then traced her to your house. While in the store, she dropt this little coin, which Mr. R. found on the floor this morning.

He sent me to-night to see if all was as it should be, and to return this piece of money.'

"'Indeed, sir, this is strange! That is my daughter's thimble, and with this coin came as a gift from a friend. Pray, tell me the appearance of the girl? Should you know her were you to see her again?'

"'Yes, ma'am, perfectly well. She was short and fleshy, black eyes, and quite a red face.'

"'Just oblige me by stepping into this ante-room, a few moments. I will leave the door ajar, and will ring the bell. If the servant that answers my call is the one, you may come out and confront her.'

"'I will obey you, ma'am.'

"'Mary, where is Bridget? It is her place to answer this bell.'

"'She has gone to her cousin's, ma'am. She went a few moments ago; she said, they had sent for her to come right off, as her cousin was ailing badly. She told me to tell

ye, she could not stop to ask your permission, as ye had company.'

" 'Where does her cousin live, Mary?'

" 'I don't know, surely, ma'am. She carried a large bundle with her last night, after Mr. Harold paid her some money, and she took another away with her to-day, saying, her cousin might want some things.'

" 'You may go, Mary.'

" 'This is indeed strange, sir,' said Mrs. H. re-admitting the clerk. 'A young woman who exactly answers to your description, has left the house since your entrance. She has lived with me three years, and I thought her an excellent servant. What is to be done? Can she be guilty? I had accused another of this deed, a person of entirely different appearance.'

" 'I thought, ma'am, I saw this young woman sweeping, when the man opened the door. She might have seen, and recognised me.'

" 'It must be true, then. I thank you, sir,

for informing me. Tell your master I will pay him six dollars for the thimble, as it is one my daughter values, and the coin also she highly prized as a keepsake. I must consult with my husband, as I know not what farther to do.'

"After the young man went away, Mrs. Harold told her daughters, who with her entered Bridget's room, but not a vestige belonging to the girl remained. She had abstracted all her things from time to time, and now she was not to be found.

"In the early afternoon of this day, Mrs. Hammond called to converse with Mrs. Harold concerning me, and Mrs. Harold told her all.

"'Oh, go directly to Mrs. Greene's, I pray you, and tell her and Bessie of the wrong you have done them. It is the very best you can do now,' said Mrs. Hammond.

"'I will ask one of my daughters to go, for I am truly sorry. I would also give her a trifle, if I had not just paid six dollars to that

man; but I will send her word, she shall have all my put-out work in future.'

" ' Mrs. Harold, excuse me, but I must speak plainly to you. Is it possible you do not feel how greatly you have wronged that poor girl? Her character is her livelihood. It is all in all to her, and you nearly deprived her of that. Would you insult her by offering money in return? I do beg of you to leave every thing, and go yourself to her; let her see you feel sorry in earnest. This will give her more comfort than all else you can do.'

" Mrs. Harold did accompany Mrs. Hammond here, and she repeated faithfully the foregoing conversation. I never felt so much respect for her before. It was such a relief to be proved innocent, for grandmother's sake, alone."

" Oh, bless you, Miss,—ma'am, oh old habits are so strong, I no more thought her guilty than I should you, pardon me. She be honest, I know, and you know. She's got

money in Mrs. Hammond's bank, beside. What should she want of gold? or gold thimbles to sell? But I am glad the real thief is known, though they cannot find out her whereabouts, yet those folks are sure it was their Bridget now, and not my good Bessie!"

"I am gratified, indeed, to hear that Bessie's reputation for honesty is not impeached, and I hope, Bessie, you will, in future, be more careful what you repeat from one house to another. You see, even now, Mrs. Harold prefers sending you her work, to having it done in the house."

"I will try, Mrs. Oswald, but I hope there will not be many like Mrs. Rivers among my customers. Have you heard of Judge Ray's loss of property?"

"Yes, and was sorry for him. I was pleased to think Agnes came home to console them at such a time."

"Mercy, ma'am, Mrs. Rivers is dreadfully put out about it, for people say her husband

helped them more than he could well afford, and that has made his wife very angry. Her maid met me the other day, and told me all about it, and if it were right, I'd like to be glad. Mrs. Rivers has always considered herself so much above every body in town."

"Bessie, do not forget you have just been rescued from a wrong imputation, and is this your gratitude, to commit wrong in return? You should never repeat evil reports, or listen to them if you can avoid it. *You* feel you have been spoken falsely of, and perhaps Mrs. Rivers's maid has not repeated a correct tale to you. I beg you to be cautious. Unless you have decided good to speak of, be quiet. Your situation absolutely requires you to be modest, patient, and prudent. You will then gain the respect of all your customers and friends, and receive a sufficient recompense in the satisfaction of knowing you have done your whole duty. If they then judge you wrongly, you will feel at ease in your heart, and must not give

yourself too much concern about it. I am glad you are so good a seamstress."

"Bless you, dear Mrs. Ella. Heaven will bless you and your good mother. You have always been kind to us, since we came here to live. And you were a very little girl, when I first heard your sweet voice."

Some good soil was again thrown around this plant, but the fruit is of slow growth.

CHAPTER XX.

Six years from her marriage found our dear Ella the mother of two sweet children, a boy and girl. Grandmother's pets, but not spoiled ones. She had seen, too truly, the benefits resulting from proper culture, to destroy the fond hopes of the young parents by unkind indulgence.

Mr. and Mrs. Oswald were beloved by all around them, and their home was a favorite resort for both old and young. They seemed prosperous and happy, both mentally and physically. They had but one trial, and that was the visibly declining health of Mrs. Everett. But the good lady had lived to see her beautiful bud come forth into full and perfect bloom, and to know and enjoy the ripe, rich fruit that followed. She felt this a

great privilege. Though loving the little germs transplanted into her daughter's garden with devoted affection, she knew they would be abundantly cared for, as the good child could not but make a good and true mother. Therefore she was submissive and ready to depart when her mission was ended here, as she soon felt it must be. Thus were her declining years made useful and happy to others, as well as herself. She was a fine example of a sincere Christian; living herself as she instructed those around her to live.

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. RIVERS disliked to return to New York with her husband, but she decided to go accompanied by her mother, as such was the expressed desire of all parties. But she was irritated and unhappy. She could not feel willing to retrench her expensive habits in the least. She gave out word she was not well, and felt unable to see any one who called upon her. She daily punished herself for her folly, when all the comforts, and very many of the luxuries of life surrounded her. Because she could not lead, she was unwilling to follow.

Several years passed on, and Mrs. Ray was a changed woman. Agnes's conduct concerning their misfortune, first made her reflect on the course she had pursued. She was

earnest in her reformation, and repented bitterly her error toward her child. She endeavored with all the power she could command to improve Agnes, but the fruit was most too ripe for change to be made in its flavor. Agnes did, at times, seem repentant, but temptation proved too strong for her to withstand.

Judge Ray and his wife resided in a lovely cottage, in the pleasant village of A. "Never had they enjoyed life so truly, as since their reverse of fortune. The judge continued his office, returning nightly to his home. Their trials had been beneficial to them, and reflection sobered and improved their minds. Age had somewhat to do also with Mrs. Ray's change, for she had become convinced of the utter heartlessness of fashionable life and fashionable friends; the latter, sunshine acquaintances, disappearing with the smallest cloud that dims the sky of prosperity.

It was more difficult for Mrs. Rivers to amend, or to fully realize the folly of her

ideas and wishes of life. *She* too must learn by the bitter teacher, experience, how necessary it is to educate the inner life, and to look within one's own bosom for protection, against the reverses attending all outward circumstances of this earthly sphere.

Mrs. Ray often visits her daughter in New York, but ever leaves her with much advice and anxiety.

On the occasion of her last departure, Agnes had promised her mother not to be so lavish of her money, and also that for one year she would endeavor to make a difference in her own expenses. She kept this resolution a few months, but feeling lonely without her mother's society, she sighed again for all the gayeties of life.

One morning she called upon a neighboring friend, who, unfortunately, displayed a rare and beautiful article of dress that she had just purchased at Stewart's, saying, "He had only one other like it in his store." This excited Agnes's ruling propensity so much,

that she sent, directly upon her return home, for the other pattern for herself.

Mingling once more intimately with her fashionable friends, her moral courage forsook her, as she became elated by their heartless flattery, and all her good resolutions faded with her ever increasing wants. *Must have*, came back to her, in regard to all the new and costly things she saw.

Dr. Rivers observed this in Agnes with sorrow, but forbore a long time speaking to her. At length he wrote to her mother, stating some facts, requesting her to invite Agnes to visit them for a while. He thought it would be received better if the invitation came from her parents.

Mrs. Ray understood the doctor at once, and by return of mail wrote to him, she had been thinking of sending for her daughter, as the judge had not been as well as usual. She wrote urgently to Agnes, remarking on her father's difficulty and feebleness, requesting her to come and cheer them in their quiet

home, for a few weeks. She hoped she would come as soon as convenient.

“Doctor,” said Agnes, following him into his library, “stop a moment. I have just received a letter from mamma, wishing me to come to A. What on earth can she want me for just at this season, when the parties and balls are coming off, and the country is so dreary? It is particularly gloomy in A. at this time of year. She says, ‘Father has been ill,’ but he must have recovered, or she would have said, he was sick now. I do not see as I can possibly go.”

“I think I would try, Agnes, and make them at least a short visit. Your father is now advanced in life, and will, in all probability, be removed from you ere long. I advise you to go. But do as you think best.”

“Oh, dear! Well, I cannot go until Mrs. N.’s ball is over; and I have heard the L.’s give a splendid affair in a fortnight. How provoking that she wants me just now.”

“You have complained of being ill your-

self recently,—would not the change be beneficial to you, my wife?"

"I was dull and moping, but since the gay season has commenced, I feel infinitely better. Society is the best medicine for me. I cannot go at present, whatever I may do some weeks hence."

Scarcely three weeks from the time Agnes received her mother's letter, Judge Ray deceased. He had formerly had sudden attacks of severe illness, denoting disease of the heart, and it was supposed, through this cause, he had been at an instant's warning removed from life.

When Agnes heard of this sad event, most truly did she regret not having answered her mother's summons, by going immediately home. Her conscience reproached her with severity; showing she had yet, under all this indifference, a conscience still, though enslaved by the tyranny of fashion and her own self-will.

She was preparing for the opera when the

news arrived; overcome with remorse and sorrow, she wished directly to join her mother in their affliction, and to hasten at once to A. On the morrow she left home, accompanied by her husband; they reached there in time to attend the last funeral rites.

Agnes was vehement in her grief. She had no inward resources to gently aid and support her. All seemed dark and hopeless, without and within. She found too late that she had truly loved her father, but only through her own selfishness had she ever before recognised it. Now, that she saw his cold corpse laid out in the garments of the dead, she wished, oh! how earnestly, that she had left the gay city to have seen him alive once more.

Mrs. Ray was also much overcome, but more patient and subdued than a few years since, one could have thought possible. Living amid quiet scenes, and engaging in her own domestic duties, a new idea of what life really was passed over her mind, and she felt

how much she had been deprived of in her former enslaved sphere.

Agnes remained a few months with her mother, but she wearied of the monotony of her life. Her restless spirit sought again for change.

Doctor Rivers had returned after the funeral to New York, but visited them every other week.

He now wished Mrs. Ray to return and live with them, making one family, enjoying together both homes. The city one in winter, returning to A—— during the warmest months.

Judge Ray's salary, of course, expired at his decease; the property left certainly belonged to Doctor Rivers, but he settled it on Mrs. Ray during her life-time, and delicately termed it her estate.

For a year they lived in more seclusion than formerly, and actually in truer enjoyment than since the doctor had been married.

Yet now the time had arrived, when Agnes's mourning attire was to be laid aside; and she seemed to have sprung into new life, for with the brighter coloring of her garb, so returned the old fancies and tastes, lit up with renewed brilliancy, showing how intensely strong is the first imbibing of knowledge, whether for good or evil. Early, very early was her love of display cultured, and grew up with her daily increasing growth. Her youth and beauty still sustained it, for age had not yet disciplined her, even through trials, to sincere repentance. A passing sorrow dimmed, but did not destroy the idol in her breast.

Again and again did Mrs. Ray remonstrate with her child concerning her extravagance; at times she would listen, but often exercised what she called her independent right.

This caused continual anxiety to her parent and husband, and their household was again made unquiet, disturbed by the self-will and tyranny of that destroyer of many a

family's peace. That empty glittering bauble fashion! If there ever was a tyrant, it is this,—hemmed in on all sides by *What will the world say?*

Three years from Judge Ray's decease, Doctor Rivers died from a contagious fever prevalent in the city. He had taken cold, as he found it absolutely necessary for him to buffet all weathers, and answer all demands for him, to meet the necessary expenses of his household. He was not in usual health at the time the fever attacked him.

After Doctor Rivers's affairs were settled, but a small sum remained to his widow. She was compelled to remove to her mother's residence in A——. She appeared to mourn for her husband; we would not be uncharitable, but we cannot but think she regretted her loss of station and property more. She was a most unhappy person. Instead of being a comforter and companion to her only remaining friend and parent, she was continually complaining, repeating over and

over again her own selfish murmurings. How much *she* was to be pitied! What could she do? Happiness was all over for her, and so forth.

Mrs. Ray was obliged to be the recipient of this. She felt it the just reward due her own folly in former times. But she fervently prayed the hour might come, when her child would see the necessity of clothing the mind in proper attire, as a thing much more needful to be sought after than the costliest garb adorning the outward casement of this priceless gem within.

Poor mother! Your task is hard, but the fruit you cultivated yourself. Use your influence to prevent others taking scions from such imperfect stock as that, planted by the hand of Fashion.

Poor victim! Overleap the barrier, and breathe again the free air of moral courage, awakening new vitality with each breath inhaled.

We have seen the bud, the blossom and

the fruit of this exotic, cultured in the foreign soil of Art. In either stage, was the plant desirable? Again we say, poor mother! Alas! pitiable child!

CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. GREENE is very infirm, and now lives in a neat little cottage with Mrs. Gray, a young carpenter's wife, who happens to be her little grandchild, Bessie. She has been married four years. Her husband is a nice young mechanic, industrious and frugal. The kind care Mrs. Everett and her daughter gave was never wholly lost upon Bessie. She had many trials to contend with, from want of properly heeding part of their instruction. Her difficulties would not have occurred, had her early tuition been more regular.

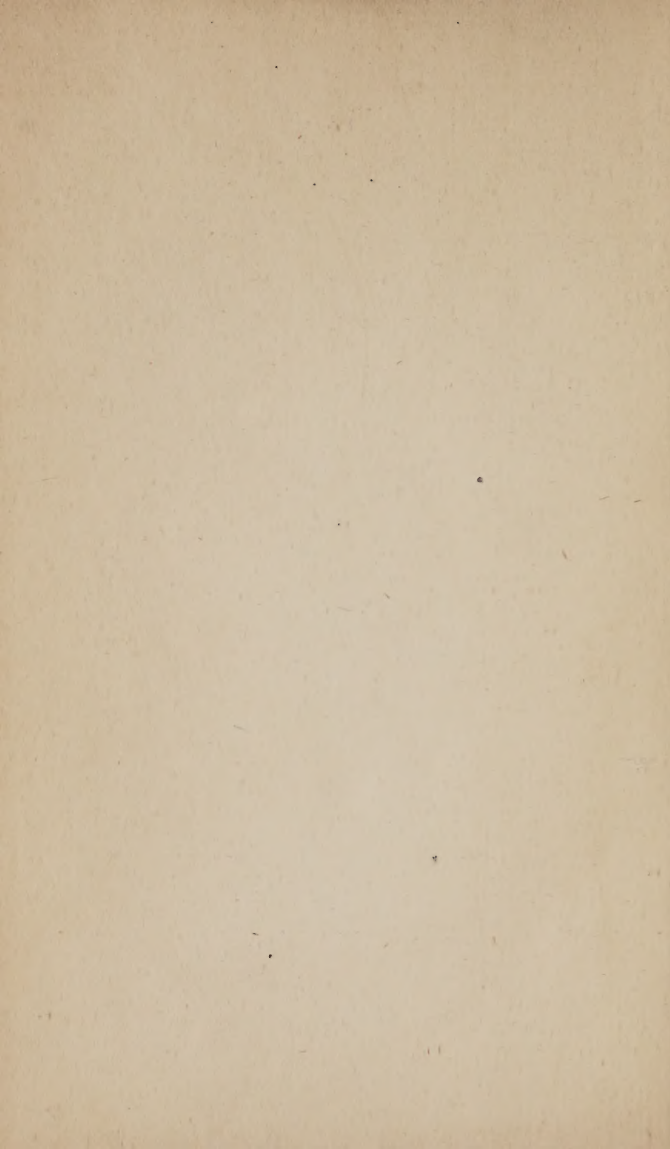
She made a tolerably good wife, but her temper not being under very good control, caused many a little breeze that would have been far better avoided; so that sunshine and

storm were alternate in their home Let us
hope beams of sunlight alone may rest over
the path of her own little bud, now nestling
to sleep sweetly in her arms.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR three buds have bloomed, and each given a specimen of their fruit. Which is the most tempting? The pure and lovely one of true parental tenderness? the apparently brilliant one of fashion? or the variegated one of good and evil?

Judge for yourself, dear reader, and leaving you, we kindly say, judge truly.



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